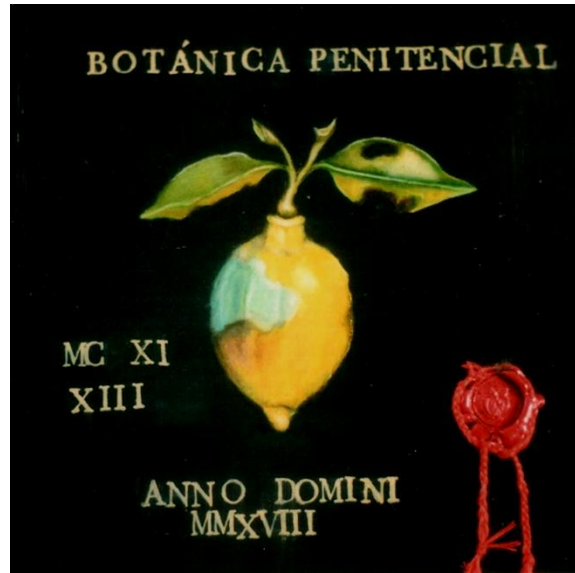


PENITENTIAL BOTANY

MARK XI, XIII ~ XIV



Penitential Botany, oil on wood.

In his essay entitled *Cezanne*, Rilke does not hesitate to perform a sacred liturgy for canonizing Cezanne's fruition: "Like Van Gogh, Cezanne put together wine bottles and apples on an old blued blanket, and in so doing he sanctifies them, as if they were his joyful saints, plenty of gladness and beauty." The German writer had never heard these words from **the Apostle** to the Romans: "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." **Apostle Paul's** apples are not joyful ones, rather apples of disgrace. Cezanne's do not mourn, but they enjoy brushed self aggrandizement. As in Adam the whole humanity is damned, so it is the fate of all fruits after his moral and spiritual failure. These **CHRIST's** severe words imply Adam's damned tree and its rotten fruits: "And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet: No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever." Rilke had not ever hinted that by dint of **The Forbidden Tree of the Paradise** human agriculture has been entirely spoiled till now. Cezanne's fruits were born from that infelicitous paradisiacal tree, its fatidic descendants they are, no matter what Rilke says. Repentance, ashes, and dust are exactly the clothing one may expect from a **Christian Vision**. Quite the contrary, Cezanne's fruits are foolishly happy, recklessly pleasant. From **The Forbidden Paradisiacal Tree** and from **The Unfruitful Fig Tree of Jerusalem** were born the fruits I imprint below, in penitential contrition and clothed in dust and ashes, carrying on their very skins **Sanctifying Stigmata**, and waiting for **The Final Redemption**, as **the Apostle** says.